ORNITHOLOGY.—*Notes on some Asiatic owls of the genus* Otus, *with description of a new form.*[1] H. FRIEDMANN and H. G. DEIGNAN, U. S. National Museum.

I

In the collections of Siamese birds in the U. S. National Museum are two specimens of *Otus* that are widely different from any other Asiatic form of the genus but are so closely and obviously related to the African *Otus senegalensis* that, in spite of the enormous geographical interval involved, we have no hesitancy in placing them in that species. In view of the difficulties inherent in such variable and poorly known birds as the Asiatic forms of *Otus*, we have borrowed extensively from the following institutions and private collectors, to whom our thanks are hereby expressed: The American Museum of Natural History, the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, the Museum of Comparative Zoology, the Field Museum of Natural History, the Raffles Museum, and W. Koelz.

Otus senegalensis distans, subsp. nov.

Subspecific characters.—Very similar to (almost indistinguishable from) *Otus senegalensis hendersoni* of Angola but slightly washed with buffy on the upperparts, this wash especially noticeable on the pale bars of the outer rectrices and the primaries, and with the feathers of the lower sides and flanks less vermiculated, more whitish than in *O. s. hendersoni.*

Type.—U.S.N.M. no. 349931, adult female, collected at Sala Me Tha, Chiengmai Province, North Siam, February 20, 1936, by H. G. Deignan.

Description of type.—General color of upperparts dark brownish gray, *conspicuously mottled with black and white.* Feathers of crown largely black, with brownish-gray border, sometimes with a whitish spot. Feathers of nape gray or whitish, with an irregular black streak along apical third of shaft and narrow broken black bars, concealed portion washed with pale ferruginous. An ill-defined pale ferruginous collar across upper back, caused by color of concealed portion of feathers, which are otherwise white with a broad black streak along apical third of shaft and with black irregular crossbars. Feathers of back with a broad black shaft-streak, otherwise vermiculated with black and grayish white, sometimes washed with pale ferruginous. Rectrices light gray-brown with blackish-brown vermiculations and shaft-streaks. Outer webs of primaries broadly barred pale gray and brownish black; inner webs blackish brown with broad dull rufous bars, which become white toward edge approaching base of feather. Outer webs of secondaries broadly barred dull rufous and blackish brown; inner webs blackish brown with large white patches, not reaching shaft and inwardly tinged with pale ferruginous. The lesser upper wing coverts rufous with indistinct blackish bars, forming a *conspicuous reddish band the whole length of the forearm.* The median and greater upper wing-coverts like the remiges. Scapulars with the outer web wholly or largely pure white, giving the appearance of a broad

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white bar along sides of back, otherwise mottled gray and black, and with an interrupted black shaft-streak. Facial disk silver-gray, each feather with indistinct blackish crossbars. Disk edged at sides of neck by pale ferruginous feathers, which are subapically marked white and tipped black, forming a distinct black and ferruginous gorget, extending to nape, but interrupted on the breast. Feathers of breast and sides of neck whitish with broad dark gray tips, black shaft-streak and irregular black crossbars. Feathers of abdomen and flanks pure white or white faintly tinged ferruginous and with very broad black shaft-streaks and irregular narrow black bars. Under tail-coverts white with black shaft-streaks or immaculate. Tarsi feathered onto base of toes, white with scattered rufous macules. Bend of wing white. Under wing-coverts white with a few irregular black and ferruginous markings. In the dried skin the maxilla is horny-black; the mandible yellowish beneath, otherwise like the maxilla. Wing: 141.8; tail: 70.5; culmen from base: 19.5. First (outermost) primary equal to the eighth; second between fifth and sixth.

II

We have examined all the pertinent members of the genus known from Africa and eastern Asia and, in general, agree with the specific groupings of Stresemann (Mitt. Zool. Mus. Berlin **12** (1):191–195. 1925). We do not, however, accept the range of *malayanus*, as it has been understood in the past. *O. malayanus* is readily separable from *japonicus* by its much darker coloration (our 8 specimens are all in a red or brownish-red plumage) and by having the basal third of the tarsus naked; the third and fourth primaries are longest and the first (outermost) lies between the sixth and seventh or equals the seventh. *O. japonicus*, of which we have ample topotypical material, is much lighter, has both red and gray phases, and has the tarsus feathered to the base of the toes; the third and fourth primaries are longest, and the first lies between the sixth and the eighth.

A skin from Szechwan (April) and another from Yunnan (October) can not be matched in our series of *japonicus*, but they do agree in every particular with *malayanus* from the Malay Peninsula (where it is known only as a winter visitor). It seems probable that *malayanus* is a breeding form from southern China south to an unknown limit, occurring in winter as far as Malaya.

We have seen one specimen inseparable from Japanese *japonicus*, taken on the small island Koh Tao (Gulf of Siam) on the same day as a specimen of *malayanus*. This implies that *japonicus* may occur in winter anywhere within the range of *malayanus*. In view of this probability, Malayan specimens should be carefully compared with Japanese birds, especially the birds in gray phase recorded by Robinson.

We have also seen three winter specimens from northern and central Siam that are near to *japonicus* but differ in somewhat darker coloration, although they are still much lighter than *malayanus*.

Among the specimens sent us by Dr. Ernst Mayr are the birds from Bur-

ma and Assam, discussed by him in the Ibis for April, 1938, p. 313. With the more extensive comparative material before us, we have identified these birds quite differently.

"*Otus scops modestus*" from Dalu is not separable from specimens of *Otus sunia sunia* from Bengal.

The series of Assamese specimens that Dr. Mayr took to be typical *spilocephalus* is here tentatively referred to *O. scops sunia*, in the absence of definitely identified specimens of red phase *sunia*, but these four birds arouse the suspicion that they may be of an undescribed form. The bird from Dabahka, called "*Otus spilocephalus latouchi*," is, in our opinion, true *Otus spilocephalus spilocephalus*, from which *latouchi* seems only doubtfully distinct.

In searching the literature with regard to the nomenclature of this group, we have discovered that *Pisorhina capensis grisea* Gunning and Roberts (Ann. Transvaal Mus. **3**:111. 1911. Bethulie, Orange Free State), is preoccupied by *Scops griseus* Jerdon (Madras Journ. Lit. Sci. **13**(2), no. 31:119. Dec. 31, 1844). We are not in position to pass on the validity of Gunning and Roberts' form, which, according to Chapin, "may perhaps prove separable," and therefore leave the renaming of it to some future student of the African scops owls.

Recently Junge (Treubia **16**(3):344. Aug., 1938) has considered *Otus umbra enganensis* Riley as a race of *O. sunia*. Previously Stresemann (Mitt. Zool. Mus. Berlin **12**:194. 1925) suggested with a question that *O. umbra* might be the same as *O. bakkamoena lempiji*. Chasen (*Handlist of Malaysian Birds*, p. 86, 1935) writes that *umbra* "can almost certainly be lumped with one of the other more widely spread Malaysian species, but as we have not seen either *umbra* or *enganensis* we can not attempt a wider nomenclature." We have examined the type specimens of *umbra* and of *enganensis* and find that they are not like any *O. s. malayanus* we have seen, and we consider them to form a specific group characterized by a massive bill and white bars on the chestnut flanks. In the type of *umbra* the first (outermost) primary is equal to the eighth, and the second is between the fifth and the sixth, whereas in *O. s. malayanus* the first is between the sixth and seventh, or equal to the seventh, the second between the fourth and the fifth. If Junge's Engano birds are really related to *sunia*, it may be that they represent an undescribed form. The type of *enganensis* has the primaries frayed, which prevents our giving its wing formula, and which also may account for the fact that Junge's bird had larger measurements than Riley gave for the type.

III

The form of *Otus bakkamoena* resident throughout Siam north of the province of Pattani (Malay Peninsula) has been considered identical with *lettia* of Nepal by all authors, except Chasen (*Handlist of Malaysian Birds*) who,

without comment, calls the birds of Peninsular Siam *condorensis* of Kloss (Journ. Siam Soc. Nat. Hist. Suppl. **8**(2):81. 1930. [Pulau Condor, *ca.* 45 miles off the coast of Cochinchina]) and Riley (U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull. **172**) who attributes to the same race a specimen from East Siam and another from Southwest Siam (where it occurs side by side with "*lettia*").

O. condorensis was named on a series of only four specimens from an island possessing no other known endemic birds, the describer having at the time highly inadequate comparative material. The most northern specimen of "*lettia*" came from North Siam, other specimens from Raheng and Bangkok. Kloss was, moreover, misled by Stuart Baker into believing that *lettia* of Nepal and *lempiji* of Java are "practically the same in general tone of plumage"; accordingly, he diagnosed *condorensis* as being paler and larger than *lempiji*, paler and smaller than *lettia*.

The alleged size differences between *condorensis* and "*lettia*" are of the slightest according to Kloss's own measurements (the wing length of the former from 155 to 161 mm, of the latter from 158 to 167) and nonexistent when a good series of Siamese birds is examined. The alleged color differences do not appear at all in two birds from Cochinchina but do appear in odd individuals from Central and North Siam. There is some individual variation shown in the color of Siamese birds from any area, but all are considerably paler than *lempiji* and, to a less marked degree, paler than birds from Szechwan (and presumably Nepal also).

We have, unfortunately, not been able to examine *lettia* from Nepal. Birds from Szechwan have been called *glabripes* by authors, but they should at least show some approach to *lettia* for geographical reasons. They do, in fact, agree perfectly with a topotypical specimen of *glabripes* as well as with birds from Tongking. The further fact that we have found nothing in literature to indicate how *glabripes* may be distinguished from Nepalese *lettia* arouses some doubt as to the validity of the former, and we feel that the two races should be critically compared.

A series of 8 birds of both sexes (sexes alike in size) from Tongking and Szechwan have the wing length from 172 to 192 mm; a further series of 22 birds from Annam, Cochinchina, East Siam, Southeast Siam, Central Siam, West Siam, and North Siam have the wing length from 154 to 166 mm. Two birds from Southwest Siam measure 147 and 152 mm and seem to be approximating *lempiji*. Two specimens from Assam measure 161 and 167, thus falling into the size group of Indochinese birds.

The Fauna of British India, Birds, ed. 2 (4:427), embracing Assam and all Burma within the range of *lettia*, gives this race a wing length from 162 to 182 mm, and it seems reasonable to suppose that if only Nepalese birds had been measured even this slight overlap with Siamese birds would disappear. If *glabripes* prove indeed inseparable from *lettia*, the difference between Siamese birds and *lettia* will appear clearly from the measurements given above.

To the pale, short-winged birds of Annam, Cochinchina, Siam, ?Burma and ?Assam, we suggest that the name *condorensis* be applied.

Material examined:

Otus senegalensis griseus	2 specimens	
graueri	1 "	
hendersoni	2 "	
senegalensis	2 "	
ugandae	2 "	
cæcus	4 "	(incl. type)
distans	2 "	
Otus cyprius	series (A. M. N. H.)	
Otus scops elegans	" "	
japonicus	23 specimens	
sunia	9 "	
rufipennis	1 "	
balli	1 "	
malayanus	8 "	
scops	11 "	
pulchellus	9 "	
menadensis	5 "	
steerei	1 "	(type)
Otus spilocephalus spilocephalus	4 specimens	
latouchi	5 "	
siamensis	1 "	(paratype)
vulpes	2 "	
Otus rufescens malayensis	2 specimens	
rufescens	1 "	
Otus sagittatus	2 specimens	
Otus umbra umbra	1 specimen (type)	
enganensis	1 " "	
Otus cuyensis	2 specimens	
Otus bakkamoena semitorques	23 specimens	
pryeri	1 "	
glabripes	10 "	
bakkamoena	2 "	
condorensis	28 "	
lempiji	20 "	
mentawi	2 "	
fuliginosus	1 "	
whiteheadi	1 "	
Otus capnodes	3 specimens	
Otus rutilus	4 specimens	